

MULTICULTURAL

VOICES



HIGHER ED ACCESS

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Utah Office of
Multicultural Affairs

ABOUT

Multicultural Voices is a quarterly magazine produced by the Utah Office of Multicultural Affairs that aims to accomplish two main goals: share the programs and projects of the MCA team and highlight the many amazing accomplishments of our diverse communities.

We hope you enjoy this publication. If you have feedback, ideas, suggestions or would like to subscribe email us!

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Every year The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Utah hosts Greek Choice Awards, an evening where the Greek Community gets together to celebrate and award students in recognition of academic, vocational and leadership achievements in school and in the community. This year, The Multicultural Greek Council President of the Year was awarded to Sattia Chozo Gonzales. Sattia serves as an intern for our office and also served as President of Kappa Delta Chi Sorority Inc. for the 2013-2014 academic year. In that year, Kappa Delta Chi completed over 1,000 hours of community service and was also awarded the 2014 Equity and Diversity Awards-Student Leadership Award for "Group Commitment to Diversity". Sattia stated she was honored to hold the President position of Kappa Delta Chi – Alpha Chi Chapter. This opportunity made her realize that her job is not done until every single student knows that with education nothing is impossible. "If there's one thing I learned during my time as president," Sattia said, "it is that without the help of my sisters, advisors, and professors, we would have not made 2013-2014 a year to remember. My job neither in Kappa Delta Chi – Alpha Chi Chapter nor in my community is done." Along with her duties at the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Sattia serves as a mentor for Jackson Elementary School as part of the Girl Scouts Healthy Living Initiative, an 8-week program that serves underrepresented students.

Congratulations Sattia! We are lucky to have you on the team.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

My mantra over the past couple of years has been “the demographics are changing” and this is specifically true of Utah’s youth. Utah is diversifying faster than any other region; especially in relation to the younger population where approximately 22% of students currently enrolled in K-12 come from an ethnic background. Currently 1 out of 4 Utah preschoolers is from an ethnic background or is biracial or multiracial.

University of Utah senior economist Pam Perlich reports that Utah’s population is now more than 20.9% minority—1 out of 5 Utahns is of an ethnic background. Multicultural Affairs (MCA) strives to provide meaningful programs like the Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit that makes a difference in the lives of disadvantaged students. In support of the Governor’s education initiative “66 by 2020” the MCA Team will continue to message the importance of education—it is the key to opportunity, the opportunity to make choices.

On February 19, MCA hosted 800 students and educators from across the state at the Multicultural Youth Leadership Day at the Capitol. It was a day to encourage civic engagement among Utah’s rapidly diversifying youth. Welcoming students and providing words of encouragement to secure a good education were: Representative Sophia DiCaro; Senators Jim Dabakis, Todd Weiler, and Luz Escamilla; Attorney General Sean Reyes; and Congressman Rob Bishop. Youth speakers Emilio Camu, Syeda Hashmi, and Oscar Cuevas inspired their peers with their stories of personal success. Keynote speaker Adrienne Andrews, Special Assistant to WSU President for Diversity, made it known that students matter with shouts of “I matter” filling the Capitol Rotunda. As is a tradition, we honored with recognition awards three students and three educators who are making tremendous impacts in their communities.

I encourage you to attend the ethnic cultural events and programs that will be held throughout the summer. These celebrations of music, art and food are occasions for our ethnic communities to embrace and share their heritage, a significant part of Utah’s cultural fabric. Through the years, these festivities have given Utah families the opportunity to experience the state’s diversity that enriches the cultural identity of everyone who calls Utah home.



Claudia H. Nakano
Director



OPINION: HIGHER ED REPRESENTATION

BY EMILIO CAMU

As technology becomes more integrated, so do trends among the youth of Utah. As one part of the country creates a new trend, it is quickly changed, imitated, and/or distributed by students through social media. Unfortunately, access to higher education has not caught up to the pace in which students follow trends. Although increasing, students of color continue to be underrepresented, including in the major institutions of higher education. Utah is seeing an increasing number of students of color from varying ethnicities which were not present in Utah ten or even five years ago. The way students are approached and encouraged to pursue higher education should be adapted and adaptable to not only the current trends, but also to the intersecting identities of students in order to maximize interest, recruitment, and

retention especially of historically and currently marginalized groups.

There is a saying for student affairs professionals, which demonstrates the issue affecting potential college and university students: the bigger the title, the less interaction with students. High school students are told, if ever, to obtain good grades, apply for scholarships, and go to college. Students are also often told by university representatives, “Money should not be an issue in attending any institution.” Many high school students want to pursue a higher education. However, they do not know the specifics in the process to apply for, fund, and continue their education. Students rarely have a unique, personal interaction with university staff. Often, students interact with university representatives who are student ambassadors. Though the closeness in age might theoretically be better to engage with high school students, personally, it is not a cohesive way to communicate especially with historically and currently marginalized groups.

With students of color, especially those with refugee backgrounds, there needs to be a more interactive way to receive academic advising in higher education which takes into account the student's history, background, and needs with the option of being advised by someone of their particular background. Admittedly, institutions understand the need for more resources for marginalized students; however, institutions do not provide the necessary resources for these students to understand how to apply, fund, and support their collegiate career. Many institutions have offices dedicated specifically for helping incoming first-year students in their transition or with questions regarding college. Although the resources exist, often the interaction between the office and the students from whom it was designed does not. High school students are sometimes intimidated by the size of the institution and are also overwhelmed during college fairs with the amount of other students with queries.

Marginalized high school students need to be offered a more interactive approach with college and university services in order to truly be successful, to increase recruitment and retention rates, and to support their communities on campuses.

Emilio Manuel Camu is a college access adviser at Cottonwood High School with the Utah College Advising Corp and officer for the Pilipino American Association of Utah.



Karen Orrego had an idea. She was a film student in her junior year at the University of Utah and wanted to see more Latin American films come to Utah. Her professor wisely told her that she shouldn't wait for someone to do it. She acted on the advice and started to talk to people, many telling her it wouldn't work.

Enter Juan Paulo Verela, a recent graduate. The two connected and Karen shared her idea with him, which Juan whole-heartedly believed in. Over the next few meetings, The Crisol Film Initiative was born.

Karen, Founder and Director of Crisol, and Juan Paulo, Program Director, scheduled meetings with local state, community and private organizations to garner support. Juan told of his experience, "A lot of the times, we would go in and there would be an idea that we were just a bunch of kids, that we didn't know what we were doing, but when we had the opportunity to sit down in front of them and share our idea, we were able to make an impact and they actually wanted to be a part of this".

Fast forward to today, Crisol is up and running with 6 films and a handful of screenings under its belt. "Usually people think of the traditions of Latin America," Orrego said, "but they don't see too much of the contemporary views in Latin America". Both have been approached numerous times after screenings with viewers who were surprised by social issues common to Latin American and the United States.

The two are very pleased with the progress the initiative has made in sharing the culture and issues of Latin America. "It has been the perfect platform to share Latin American culture within Salt Lake and provide a space for discourse, to juxtapose L.A. culture with US American culture," Juan-Paulo said.

"I want people to be inspired by the art and also be inspired to create their own initiatives," said Karen. She advised that if you have an idea, start talking to people about it; the bigger the network you can build, the higher the chance of obtaining success.

You can find Crisol at:
<http://crisolfilminitiative.weebly.com>



A DAY ON CAPITOL HILL

Photos (Top to Bottom, Left to Right): Students look on as Emily Fox delivers her address with Sen. Todd Weiler at her side; Youth speakers and award winners(from L-R): Oscar Cuevas, Diana Phung, Kyra John, Emilio Camu, Syeda Hashmi and Emily Fox; A view from the House of Representatives; Lanna Mi recites an MLK speech in English and Chinese; Attorney General Sean Reyes addresses the students; Attorney General Sean Reyes presents the youth and educator awards; Youth speaker Oscar Cuevas shares his story with fellow peers.

Civic engagement was the theme of this year's Multicultural Youth Leadership Day at the Capitol. On February 19th 800 students, representing 10 school districts, packed the Capitol Rotunda to hear messages from state and community leaders on education and civic engagement.

Rep. Sophia DiCaro led the meeting and introduced Lao Monks who opened the meeting with a moving cultural reverence. Adrienne Andrews, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity at Weber State University, presented her keynote address which focused on cultural strength and community involvement.

Following Ms. Andrews, Senator Jim Dabakis introduced three youth speakers Emilo Manuel Camu, Oscar Cuevas and Syeda Hashmi. Each youth speaker told their story of persistence in the face of adversity. Syeda, a 15 year old from Taylorsville High, told of her experience of moving to Utah from Pakistan three years ago. She was bullied for her religion and race. It was hard, but all she could think of was her Dad's sacrifice to get her to America. She advised students to not give up, that it doesn't matter where you are from, and you should always strive to do your best.

Following the youth speakers, Senator Todd Weiler introduced two students who reside in his district. Emily Fox and Lanna Mi were winners in Davis School District's competition and performed recitations of Martin Luther King Jr. speeches. Lanna Mi performed her recital in English and Chinese.

Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes and U.S. Congressman Rob Bishop both spoke on gaining an education and the importance of civic engagement. Attorney General Reyes told the youth, "A lot of people think the American dream guarantees success. The American dream only guarantees opportunities."

Attorney General Reyes closed the meeting with the presentation of student and teacher achievement awards for excellence in leadership and education. Thomas Hutchinson, Braydon Eden and Janalee Purtle earned the teacher awards. Helen Sanchez, Kyra John and Diana Phung were recipients of the student awards.



KEARNS PRIDE BY: JENNY HOR

The Kearns Library is entering its golden years after celebrating its 50th anniversary. The library was one of the first branches built after the establishment of the Salt Lake County Library System. Today, it is one of the busiest branches serving approximately 22,000 patrons each month.

“The library isn’t just a place for books—it’s a community center,” says David Bird, youth services librarian. It serves as a safe space for students once the final school bell rings. Students from nearby Oquirrh Hills Elementary School and Kearns Junior High School walk a short distance before arriving at the library’s front doors. After-school programming includes clubs dedicated to anime and community service.

A Vision for Diversity, Jennifer Fay, library manager, believes Kearns’ diverse population “defines its character and provides a broad representation of community.” According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, a little over 30 percent of residents are identified as Latino. Pacific Islanders and Asians comprise much smaller shares but their communities are prominent nonetheless. A drive through 5400 South showcases the many markets and shops that cater to ethnic residents.

The library understands the demographic changes that took place over the past few decades. The shelves include a Spanish collection for the large number of residents who speak the language. A French collection exists primarily for students enrolled in a French dual immersion program at neighboring Diamond Ridge Elementary School.

“We like to do programming that is pretty diverse,” says Carrie Rogers-Whitehead, senior librarian of teen services. “We have bilingual family nights and bilingual story times.”

Currently, the bilingual program focuses on Spanish and English but Bird would like to see more languages included. He notes the large Polynesian and Vietnamese populations as communities he would like to engage.

A Place to Call Their Own, A mural celebrating the library's half-century mark is found along the retaining wall on the east end. The pictures depict the township's celebrated history. The mini history lesson begins with a portrait of U.S. Senator Thomas Kearns who the town is named after. Musical notes adorn the upper mid-section symbolizing Kearns' once lively jazz scene. Various hands and a map of the world pay homage to the township's prominent multiculturalism. The mural continues with pages of an open book spilling into mountain ranges with fighter jets above, a nod to Camp Kearns which occupied the area during World War II. A single speed skater represents Kearns' involvement in the 2002 Winter Olympics, which houses the Olympic Oval a few blocks southwest of the library. Perhaps most heartening is the adjacent wall where book spines feature the names of students.

More than art, the mural serves as a collective effort made possible by residents. Library patrons, both young and old, participated in the project. Student organizations such as the Kearns High School Latinos in Action, Kearns Youth Council, Junior Spiritual Empowerment League, and United Way of Salt Lake joined forces to paint a space that belongs to all members of the Kearns community.

"The mural was not only a statement of Kearns pride. It was a way for the community to come together and for youth in particular to have more ownership in their community," says Rogers-Whitehead. "I think when people have that ownership and they're part of something then they respect [their community] more. It's an investment these youth have."

Keith Harris, a junior at Kearns High School, was one of many students who took part in the mural. "The mural is a great representation of our community and local library. Great art can be found anywhere. Even at places you least expect it."

When asked what he thought about diversity, he states, "Basically, people with different views [coming] together." The mural brought people together and showed some hometown pride along the way.



Students stand in front of their mural



Carrie Rogers-Whitehead, Senior Librarian

RECOGNITION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Congratulations to Dr. Jackie Thompson and Dr. Karen Johnson for their outstanding achievements and honors in academia.

Dr. Thompson, a member of the Multicultural Commission and Idaho State University alumnus, will receive the Professional Achievement Award from Idaho State University. She will lead the graduates of the College of Education in the May 9, 2015 commencement for Idaho State University.

Dr. Johnson, a member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commission, will receive the University of Utah College of Education Service Award.

Please join us in congratulating these two amazing commission members.



Dr. Karen Johnson



Dr. Jackie Thompson

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